

# SAS NEWSLETTER

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## **SAS 2009 MEETING** **WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA** **March 12-14, 2009**

**"Beyond Southern Borders"**  
Call for papers and conference information  
**Submission Deadline extended to January**  
**20, 2009**

Local Arrangements Chair: Dr Patricia Lerch, UNC  
Wilmington  
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**What is, where is, "the South?"** One possibility is, clearly, an anthropology - in its broadest 4-fields meaning - of the Southern United States. If so, then where are those boundaries? There is the invisible, yet quite sturdy, Mason-Dixon Line, the very real Mississippi River and Ohio River, the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic Ocean, and a chain-link fence at the Texas-Mexico border that is also the Rio Grande. There are multiple versions of "the South" depending on your worldview. When we consider American Indian populations, then the reaches of Southern Anthropology may well lead to the Caribbean or California. When we also consider immigration and emigration to and from "the South," we reach on to Mexico, Central and South America, indeed, to the entire world.

Faye V. Harrison of Cape Fear Community College will deliver the Plenary Address, "Navigating Transborders in the Contemporary South: Networking in Human Rights Discourse and Politics," on Thursday evening.



The Keynote Address, "The U.S. South in Global and Anthropological Perspective," by James Peacock of UNC Chapel Hill, will be given on Saturday evening.

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ANTHROPOLOGIST*  
Call for Submissions  
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WEB ADDRESS:  
[www.southernanthro.org](http://www.southernanthro.org)

*Please send member  
news to  
[mhuber@umw.edu](mailto:mhuber@umw.edu)*



The Cape Fear Riverboat Co. will take us on a scenic tour of the beautiful Cape Fear River on Saturday afternoon. The tour includes the estuary and river views of historic sites.

**Hotel accommodations** have been arranged with the Hilton Wilmington Riverside Hotel, 301 North Water Street, Wilmington, North Carolina 28401-3934. Rates are \$129.00 a night. For reservations call 910-763-5900 or go to <http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/ILMNCHF-SAS-20090312/index.jhtml>.

The general proposal guidelines as well as abstract, registration and membership forms are all available on the [www.southernanthro.org](http://www.southernanthro.org) website. Information regarding the Annual Student Paper competition is available on the website as well.

**Membership and Registration Fees:**

All participants at the Southern Anthropological Society Annual Meeting must be members of the SAS. Dues: **Individual** membership, \$60.00; **Student** membership, \$30.00; **Couples** (two persons, each enjoying full voting rights), \$90.00. SAS dues are additional to the conference registration fees, but may be included in a single check (in US Dollars, payable to **Southern Anthropological Society**; for forms go to <http://www.southernanthro.org>) and should be sent directly to Dr. Margaret Huber at University of Mary Washington. Enrollment for special events will be available by email and payable upon arrival at the meeting. **Meeting Registration Fees:** \$60 for professional anthropologists; \$30.00 for students.



# 2008 Undergraduate Research Paper Competition Prize Winner

## Brewing a Chinese Nation: Nation Building in a Chinese Café in Chicago Chinatown

Chun-Yi Sum  
Washington and Lee University,  
Lexington, Virginia

*Cha Chaan Teng* is absolutely our symbol. It is 100% a product of Hong Kong. It witnesses the change of time. It is the epitome of Hong Kong.  
- From a Winning Entry in the 2007 "We Love Hong Kong" Campaign<sup>1</sup>

In summer 2007, a private firm in Hong Kong hosted an online competition entitled "We Love Hong Kong", in which it called upon the public to submit reasons why they like their city. Among the 100 winning entries, 9 participants cited *Cha Chaan Teng* (茶餐廳 Chinese café or Hong Kong-style café) and its food products in their responses. These participants described symbolic characteristics represented by Chinese cafés, such as inclusiveness, efficiency, flexibility, and diversity, to illustrate the spirit of Hong Kong and their regional attachment.

Having grown up in Hong Kong, I am not unfamiliar with the rhetoric of Chinese cafés being a proud invention and appropriate representation of Hong Kong. From journalistic publications to elitist literature, from popular broadcasting to everyday discourse, Chinese Cafés have often been used as a powerful cultural symbol to evoke a sense of regional belonging. As pioneers in social scientific studies of food, anthropologists have long been interested in the relationship between food consumption and expressions of race, ethnic, class, and national identities (Caplan 1997:13.) It is fascinating to me, as a student of anthropology and a native of Hong Kong, how and why different layers of cultural meanings and symbolism are infused into Chinese cafés. I am intrigued by the question of whether the cultural domains and regional identity associated with Chinese cafés replicate themselves among diasporic populations as similar types of cafés proliferate in overseas Chinese communities.

This study is based on empirical data yielded from 8 weeks of ethnographic interviews and participant observation in a Chinese café in Chicago Chinatown. Analyzing expressions of national identity among patrons' interactions, I investigate the nature and development of nationalism in the café, and seek to understand the sense of national belonging among first generation Chinese immigrants in Chicago. Employing Benedict Anderson's theory of "Imagined Communities" (2006 [1983]) as my major theoretical framework, I argue that the diasporic population actively participates in redefining the boundaries of the Chinese nation through collective imagination and discursive activities. With the spread of Chinese nationalists overseas, the Chinese nation has expanded beyond the Chinese state to incorporate diasporic populations. In contrary to some transnationalist theories who argue global migration processes undermine the role of nation-states in maintaining world order, I contend that national boundaries still render the nation limited and separated from other nations. I conclude the paper with a critical examination of Arjun Appadurai's theory of "Modernity at Large" (1996) in explaining diasporic identity and predicting the future of nation-states.

### Research Design and Methods

Over the summer of 2007, I frequented the Dragon Café<sup>2</sup> in Chicago Chinatown for my field research. Although most of my visits took place during the morning rush hour, I made sure that all times of the days and all days of the week were covered. During my visits, I observed people's social interactions and dining etiquette. I also talked to customers and staff to elicit information and participants for my study.

This study elicited information from 6 formal taped interviews, 8 informal interviews, and other casual conversations conducted over meals and social gatherings. Consultants to this research project were customers and staff of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.welovehongkong.hk/>, accessed November 15, 2007.

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<sup>2</sup> Names of people and café used in this paper are all pseudonyms unless otherwise specified.

Dragon Café. I recruited most of the participants directly in the café, and reached some through my connections with a social service agency where I volunteered during the 8 weeks of research. Participants in the formal interviews included 4 men and 3 women, 5 of whom were regular café patrons. All except one were over 50 years of age, whose age group made up the dominant clientele of the café. Three were retired, and four were working or self-employed. All were first generation immigrants from Hong Kong and Guangdong province in South China. Their years of residence in the States ranged from 9 to 42 years. All taped interviews were open-ended, and lasted for 20 to 70 minutes each. Although some consultants could communicate in English, all interviews were conducted in Cantonese and translated into English during the transcription process. This exploratory study takes a grounded theory approach, in which conclusions drawn, while supplemented by established theories, are primarily based on field data and empirical observation.

### Nation as Imagined Community

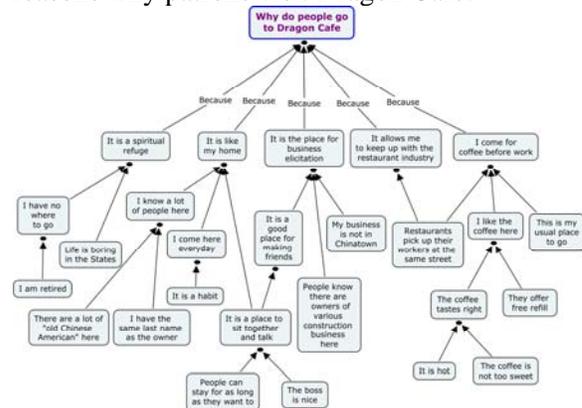
In his study of nationalism and nation building, Benedict Anderson defines the nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (2006 [1983]:6); limited because of the presence of “finite...boundaries beyond which lie other nations”, sovereign because “nations dream of being free” from the “divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm” (2006 [1983]:7). As many classic theorists do, Anderson believes that the nation exists in individuals’ minds, and is largely an invention of imagination (see, for examples, Hobsbawm 1983, and Gellner 1964). Imagination allows people to “live the image of their communion” in a “deep, horizontal comradeship” with other members in the nation whom they have never known, met, or ever heard of (Anderson 2006 [1983]:6-7). Image, boundary and membership of a nation are all subjective constructions of people who participate in the collective imagination process.

While the nation as finite and limited is central to Anderson’s conceptualization of “nation”, some theorists, especially in the emerging field of transnationalism, suggest the disintegration of boundaries in the transnational global landscape. Arjun Appadurai, for example, coins the term “modernity at large” (1996) to describe the phenomenon in which

“nation-states” are no longer the center of modernity. Modernity is now defined by individuals “at large,” who are empowered by the agency to experience modernity in their own terms. “Electronic mediation” and “mass migration” allow more people to directly and indirectly experience the world, and “impel (and sometimes compel) the work of imagination” (Appadurai 1996:4) by opening up the ground for mass participation in the formerly elitist “social practice” (1996:31) of imagining about collective communities. Immigrants, refugees, exiles, tourists and other moving groups and individuals also actively participate in nation-building “at large.”

### Dragon Café

I identified 14 self-proclaimed Chinese cafés in Chicago Chinatown. Some consultants subdivide these cafés into the two categories of “mainland style café” and “Hong Kong style café.” According to my consultants, most of the cafés in Chicago Chinatown, including Dragon Café, belong to the “mainland style” category. They are “old fashioned”, and in a way more “local”. Mainland style cafés offer “less delicate” food with a cheaper price and more generous portions. Many of them specialize in baked goods, and offer a smaller variety of meal options. These cafés have more regular and loyal patrons, who either come to have breakfast before work, or linger around to read the newspaper and to talk to people. While most customers come from the southern part of mainland China, there are also customers from Hong Kong, Northeast China and other South-East Asian countries. Most customers in Dragon Café are men who are over 50 years old. Family and women are less frequently seen in mainland style cafés. The following causal tree shows the reasons why patrons visit Dragon Café:



### Collective Imagination in Dragon Café

At the Dragon Café, imagination about a Chinese homeland is constantly at work. Café

customers speak of a Chinese homeland that they faintly remember from their remote experience, supplemented by media representations of China and conversations with friends and relatives. Such representations are often idealized and romanticized, sometimes dubiously supported by apocryphal information and exaggerated expressions. Nevertheless, these representations create an image of “home” to which café customers can relate. As observed in interactions and conversations among café customers, China and Hong Kong are popular topics of discussions. Such topics almost certainly guarantee enthusiastic discussions and active participation. The words “root” and “home” often come up in conversations. When immigrants talk about visiting China, they usually employ the word “go back” to describe the geographical movement. Although some of the consultants have immigrated to the United States for a long time, and even blatantly regard America to be their “last home,” China is still spoken of as a place to which immigrants *could* return.

I want to go back [to China]. [CYS: Do you like America?] .....No connections. Connections... people are more split up... I don't know their language. It was so good in China. I had colleagues. I had classmates. I had friends.

Green Card (document for permanent residency in the States) is a *jile* [雞肋 chicken bone]: it does not taste good, but it is too wasteful to throw it away. When someone got a Green Card, everybody was jealous. [However, when one actually set foot in America, one found it to be a disappointing experience and] always debated to oneself whether to go back [to China] or not.

Despite their permanent settlement in the United States, many immigrants generally see themselves as being members of the Chinese homeland ethnically and culturally. Most consultants are reluctant to completely cut ties with their Chinese roots. A man who moved to the States more than 30 years ago took deep offence when other customers described his American-born-daughter as a *zhu sheng* [竹升 bamboo stick] (a slang term for foreign-

born Chinese who are not brought up in Chinese traditions. Like bamboo, they retain the Chinese outlook, but are hollow in cultural knowledge:) “Don't you dare call her a bamboo stick. She is a pure-blooded Hong Kongese!”

When asked the reason why he had not applied for United States citizenship, another customer from Hong Kong proudly told me that he still relished his special linkage with home:

As I always say, Hong Kong is not the best place on earth. But my roots come from Hong Kong, so I of course think that it is the best in the world. [...] I think I will not be able to get used to Chicago even if I spend my entire life here. [I keep my Hong Kong identification card] because I can go back whenever I wish. I always joke with my friends who have attained American citizenship: if we went back to Hong Kong together, by the time I reached home, you would still be stuck at immigration with your U.S. passport!

In a lot of such conversations, “life back home” is portrayed in an idealized fashion. Many Chinese immigrants are disappointed with themselves for their descended socio-economic status after moving to the United States. They habitually talk about home as if it were a land of opportunity where their language skills and ethnicity would not impede their careers. While less developed areas in China are described as places with a low cost of living where one could lead a comfortable life, big cities in Asia are often associated favorably with modernity and luxury. Customers speak favorably of the Chinese economy and the standard of living in China. Sometimes they make comparison to their own living conditions and expenses in America

America produces a lot of trash. China is much better. [...] Air conditioners are so cheap in China! You can buy a new one with US\$300, they even install that for you [...] Products in China are so cheap. A color television [with a lot of different functions] costs only a hundred dollars!

Food is another complaint that immigrants have about life in the United States. According to Harvey Levenstein, food habits are often among the cultural practices that are

most resistant to change (1980). Similarly, immigrants tend to hold onto the consumption of ethnic food because of a general nostalgia for the taste of homeland. It is not uncommon to hear customers complaining about the taste, price, and limited variety of food available in Chinatown:

Hong Kong is always the best place for food. There are so many varieties. You can go to tea restaurants, Chinese cafes, noodles, congee, western style, you name it. For a few bucks you get a big bowl of noodles. Where can you find this kind of deal in America?

Do you really like the pastries here? You can stone someone to death with a pineapple bun (a type of Chinese pastry with sugary crisp on top) [because it is so hard]! It tastes alright in the morning when it first comes out of the oven. [...] When it is not warm anymore, it is almost inedible. [...] Here (in Chicago) one has to settle for less.

The service [at Dragon Café] is so bad. What kind of restaurant treats their customers like that? They shout [so loudly and rudely] as if they were in a fight with the customers. They know people would still come back regardless, so they do not care about their service at all. We [the old patrons] understand that, but how could you operate a restaurant like that? What do you think how outsiders, say those from the suburbs, think about it? [...] We come here not because the food is good. They all complain about the food, but they keep ordering the same thing the other day... it is called *tie qian mai nan shou* [貼錢買難受 paying money to buy your own suffering.]

The above examples show that customers go to Dragon Café not only because of the food it offers, but also because of their emotional ties attached

to the place. Social interactions are a big part of café life. The space provided by the café allows immigrants to come together to participate in the collective imagination of a Chinese homeland.

#### *The Role of Media*

Besides the collective space to imagine, frequent exchanges of information in Chinese cafés also facilitate nation creation. Anderson attributes the rise of national consciousness to print-capitalism, the “half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity” (2006 [1983]:43). He argues that modern development as related to printing technology and communication, involving newspapers, novels, and other print media, is instrumental in transforming our experience of time, and thus make the nation, as a new form of community, imaginable. Newspapers give rise to a “mass ceremony” of daily consumption among a large group of unrelated participants. The date at the top of the newspaper also provides the essential connection to remind readers of the communities to which they belong. Expanding Anderson’s theory of print-capitalism and nationalism, much recent scholarship explores the impact of electronic media and information technology in reshaping nationalism and diaspora identities. In a world with rapidly moving people and information, anthropologists come to see the field in which they work as constructed across spatial boundaries (see Axel 2004, Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Metcalf 2001). “Electronic mediation” and “mass migration” facilitate the organization of cultural processes into global “landscapes” of *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *ideoscapes*, *financescapes* and *technoscapes*, which transcend national boundaries and define new landscapes for ethnographic studies (Appadurai 1991). With this new globalized perspective, anthropologists now tend to see diasporas as “processes of subjectification and temporalization” propelled by information technology and electronic media (Axel 2004:45).

Both print and electronic media are frequently seen at the Dragon Café. Most people visited the cafés with Chicago-published-Chinese newspapers in hand. I observed that people commented on the current issues they read about in the morning newspapers as a way to initiate conversations. Many conversations

start with casual comments that people make when reading their newspaper. Such topics include crimes in Chinatown and economic development in China: “This man is even richer than Li Ka-Shing [a rich merchant in Hong Kong]” or “Someone’s apartment got broken into yesterday.”

Television is another medium through which immigrants keep in touch with the Chinese homeland. The television in Dragon Café does not catch much attention from the patrons in the morning rush hours when most people are busily engaged in talking or reading newspapers, but I often noticed customers watching television together when I visited in the afternoon. The broadcasting is in Cantonese most of the time, the major medium of communication in Chicago Chinatown among immigrants from South China and Hong Kong. During my 8 weeks in Chinatown, I have seen only two types of television programs broadcasted in Dragon Café: news (Chinese and local) and Chinese dramas (in either Cantonese or Mandarin). Most of these television dramas were already broadcast in China and Hong Kong several years ago. When the café is quiet during non-peak hours, it is not uncommon to see groups of men focusing on the television and making comments on the story line from time to time. When discussing immigrant entertainment in Chinatown, a consultant noted that most programs broadcast are run by overseas branches of the Chinese media:

We have programs from TVB [a broadcasting company in Hong Kong]. Yes, here they have TV channels from Hong Kong. It is called “Jade world” [whereas the Hong Kong version of the channel is called Jade]. TVB has its American East version. They have American East, American West, and Taiwanese news too.

Newspapers and television programs in Chinese languages reinforce immigrants’ cultural and ethnic identity as Chinese. The heavy emphasis on Chinese news keeps immigrants updated on the recent development in China, and it constantly reminds them that they have a homeland across the ocean. Operated by branches of media enterprises in Hong Kong and China, newspapers and television channels establish a connection between life in Chinatown and pre-immigration experiences. They facilitate immigrants’

communication with the homeland, thus contributing to the process of collective imagination.

Newspaper and television are an important part of café cultural life. The consumption of print media in Chicago, however, does not fit entirely into Anderson’s model of *simultaneity*. In Anderson’s model of nation building, nationalist feeling arises from the simultaneous consumption of the same newspaper – “a ceremony [that is] replicated by thousands (or millions) of others” (2006 [1983]:35). The consumption of newspaper in China and in Chicago is neither simultaneous in time nor in form: mainland Chinese and diasporic Chinese read different newspaper at different times. The television programs immigrants consume are replayed versions that have already been broadcast in Asia. The diasporic population, being separated from the current experience in mainland China, is not likely to experience the national communion in the way that Anderson has described. The temporal and geographical separation from the homeland gives rise to a delayed experience of the nation. The diaspora does not move across time with the homeland community simultaneously, and yet it still tastes the communion with the rest of the nation under the sponsorship of media consumption.

### **Imagined Nation for Individuals**

Many of the patrons have not been back to China for a long time. They recognize that China and Hong Kong have changed a lot since their last visits, and they thus speak of their far-away home with a sense of cautious distance. For example, when a group of café customers discussed a member’s recent experience in Hong Kong, the man admitted that he got lost in a place he used to know by heart:

I don’t know how to find my way in Hong Kong anymore. Like Nam Sang Wai [a name of a place], how do you get there? I don’t even have the slightest idea.

Despite such outdated knowledge of home, café customers are fond of making references to the homeland that they have experienced in the past or the homeland they have in mind. Representations of the Chinese homeland created at the Dragon Café are selective and highly imaginative. Although some details of the imagined China are supported by participants’ first-hand experience or knowledge from other credible sources, images of home remain highly romanticized.

Jimmy, for example, is well-known in the café for being talkative and sociable, but also one who is prone to exaggeration. According to some café patrons, Jimmy boasts a lot and always likes to talk about rich Asian merchants. After spending a few mornings with Jimmy, I also found that Jimmy idolized Chinese merchants, and he always brought up their names in conversation. He also liked to talk about how expensive things are, and how rich people are in Hong Kong: “People spend two thousand dollars on a shirt, couple thousands for each square feet of an apartment.” Jimmy habitually referred to Hong Kong as a place where it is easy to get rich. As he enthusiastically paraded his familiarity with the Asian economy, other patrons at the table shrugged and smiled at me as if to apologize for his eccentric behavior. It occurred to me that no one seemed to be taking Jimmy’s narration very seriously.

It is also worth pointing out that many conversations bring together people who emigrated from different parts of China. Cantonese and Toishanese are the two most popular southern Chinese dialects in Chicago Chinatown. Many conversations in cafés are carried out in both, or even more, dialects, with people employing the dialect with which they feel the most comfortable. Some patrons claimed that they understood all these dialects in their entirety, but others confessed to me that they found it difficult to comprehend complete conversations. As a result, conversations sometimes dissolve into incoherency. An consultant told me that one did not need to understand a language fluently to participate in large table discussions. Many people are not even seeking listeners. They merely want to voice their opinions and feelings about China. Thus, the image of China collectively constructed in the café, while having some common attributes, is unique and significant to each individual in its own way. The idealized image of China as a common frame of reference, while transcending regional variations, also acknowledges individual and local differences.

### **State Politics and Imagined Nation**

Collective reminiscences about the Chinese homeland are also apolitical in nature. In midst of many China-centered conversations, discussions about contemporary Chinese politics are noticeably absent. A consultant told me that they tended not to “talk about things

like that in cafés,” since political orientation was too “personal” and was more likely to arouse unnecessary arguments. Another consultant said that people would not discuss the conflicts between Taiwan and China because there was “no point to have a fight while relaxing in the café.” Many Chinese immigrants are evasive about political issues because divergence in political views often becomes the source of confrontation in Chinatown. In Chicago Chinatown, social organizations and social service agencies find it very hard to stay politically neutral, however. Their political stances, whether implicitly conscious or unintentionally manifested, often give rise to “embarrassing situations” in the cultural activities they organized. The order of speech in ceremonies is taken seriously as ranking of political allegiance. The sitting arrangement in banquets has to be carefully planned so that neither Chinese nor Taiwanese delegates would feel left out. It is almost impossible to shut political rivalry out of the cultural realm. As a result, customers are ambivalent about recent developments in China. On the one hand, they are happy about increasing economic prosperity and are proud of being Chinese. On the other hand, some are disappointed by the political trends in China. Tom said that there are many imperfections in Chinese politics despite its economic development: “One has to be critical about China. It is of course not a perfect country. Like democracy – how can China be prosperous without democracy?”

By keeping political dialogues out of the café, customers can identify themselves with their Chinese roots without choosing a political allegiance between China and Taiwan. In this regard, the café provides customers with a refuge from political identification with the Chinese state. Customers are free to imagine a China without necessarily associating it with political affairs. They can talk about Chinese cultural and economic achievements to imagine an idealized homeland with which they are proud to identify themselves. It becomes possible to separate the Chinese nation from the communist state.

### **Nationalism in Chinese cafés**

Although idealization and exaggeration are often involved in its creation, the imagined Chinese homeland is not entirely a fabrication. Café customers’ inventions and recollections of China, however vaguely and creatively, are

grounded in a sense of belonging to a common root situated in the political entity of the Chinese state. Immigrants in Chicago are physically separated from the state, but they still take pride in being part of the Chinese nation. They are proud of the economic development of China, and hope to identify themselves with the prospering Asian power. Through collective imaginations, customers reinforce their membership in their homeland community and redefine the boundaries of the Chinese nation to one that is not bounded in geographical space.

The collective sentiment that I witnessed at the Dragon Café is neither extra-national nor counter-national. Immigrants demonstrate keen eagerness to relate themselves to the Chinese homeland. It is not their hope to break down such boundaries that ethnically and nationally define themselves from the others. What immigrants in Chicago Chinatown want to see is the expansion of the imagined national boundaries to include the diasporic population as part of the Chinese nation. Deterritorialization and increasing global flows, thus, do not function to undermine the role of nations in maintaining world order. Their major impact lies in their potential to promote the fluidity and mutability of national borders. Despite their geographical presence in Chicago, these café patrons are Chinese nationalists who identify themselves with China but no where else.

### **Nations, “Transnations”, States, and their Boundaries**

Arjun Appadurai describes the relationship between nation and state a “marriage of convenience” (1996:160) whose boundaries do not necessarily correspond. My observations at the Dragon Café support Appadurai’s argument about the divorce of nation and state: although customers no longer reside nor identify with the Chinese state, they see themselves as part of the Chinese nation. Freed from the spatial boundaries confined by states, nations become delocalized into “*transnations*, which retains a special ideological link to a putative place of origin but is otherwise a thoroughly diasporic collectivity” (Appadurai 1996:172).

Appadurai notes that the term *transnation* is only a temporal arrangement to describe the post-national and extra-territorial complexity that has not been succinctly conceptualized in social scientific language (1996:166). I, too, find the notion of *transnation* confusing. The idea of *transnation* seems contradictory to Appadurai’s contention about the blurring of

state boundaries and the resultant demise of nation-states. Appadurai’s definition of *transnation* downplays the significance of nationalist loyalty to a physical homeland, which I still believe to be an important ingredient in nationalism, at least according to my observations in the Chicago Chinese diaspora.

As Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson contend,

As actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, *ideas* of culturally and ethnically distinct places become even more salient. [...]

Remembered places have often served as symbolic anchors of community for dispersed people.

This has long been true of immigrants, who use memory of place to construct imaginatively their new lived world. “Homeland” in this way remains one of the most powerful unifying symbol for mobile and displaced peoples, though the relation to homeland may be very differently constructed in different settings” (1992:10-11)

Chicago Chinatown is by no means a rootless community “with no sense of place” (Appadurai 1996:29). People I talked to still referred to China as a national entity with definite boundaries. Represented by (though not geographically corresponding with) the state of China, the Chinese nation is sovereign and free, influenced but not overridden by external global processes. Similarly, Richard Handler characterizes “nation as a collective individual and a collection of individuals” (1983:39). The nation is sovereign to act as a collective individual on the global political stage. Its members, as constituents of the nation, are characterized by a common belief of belonging that binds them to “their kind” and distinguish them from those who are not of the same national types. In the heart of their nationalist sentiment is a clear allegiance to a geographical entity in Asia, however vaguely defined. The spatial specification of China is very important to customers’ sense of identity. China is still the place where the roots situate, the homeland to which one can dream of returning. No matter how national boundaries transform, they are certainly significant. Although Appadurai could be right in predicting the imminent downfall of nation-states in maintaining world order, the collective identity of belonging to a nation is

still influential in creating individuals' national identity and sense of self.

Chinese cafés, referred to by a consultant as a “folky hang-out place” in which social interactions among a stable clientele are encouraged, provide an ideal space for collective reminiscence and imagination. Through their imagination of a Chinese homeland and manifestation of their cultural and emotional ties to such, immigrants identify themselves as part of the greater Chinese nation and seek emotional reinforcement of such sentiment from their fellow customers. Studies in transnationalism show that diasporic relationship with the homeland and the host community is a complex topic that cannot be described by a single model (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007.) In my case study of Dragon Café, geographical distance from Asia does not undermine immigrants' attachment to their homeland. Instead, nationalists engage in activities that empower their diasporic voice in redefining the boundaries of the Chinese nation.

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## ~MEMBER NEWS~

Jennifer Patino, Georgia State University, announces the publication of her book, *Consumption and Social Change in a Post-Soviet Middle Class*, by Woodrow Wilson International Center Press and Stanford U Press, 2008.



### SAS Treasurer's report 2007-2008

Respectfully submitted by Heidi M. Altman

Starting balance	July 1, 2008		8,969.49
Deposits		Memberships, registrations & subscription events	11527.00
			20,496.49
Expenditures			
		WebHosting, Yahoo Services *2 months @ 12.70/mo. 7 months @ 12.94/mo.	128.92
		Meeting supplies (Badges, folders, etc.)	209.80
		Meeting Events (recouped through member tickets)	1013.55
		Meeting program printing	685.99
		Hotel costs	3478.29
		President's room	413.60
		Prizes and Awards **	875.00
		Mtg. Reimbursements for overpayment or registrations errors	47.00
		Postage for endowment mail out	311.00
			6913.15
Final Balance	May 31, 2008		13,583.34

\* For approximately 2 months there was a problem with the organization's check card, and the payment was made with the secretary-treasurer's personal credit card. It is not clear why the amount fluctuated between the three monthly amounts.

\*\* \$250.00 is still pending, as one of the recipients of the Mooney Prize has not cashed his check. The final balance will have to be adjusted down to include this amount.

# *Southern Anthropologist*

The Journal of the Southern Anthropological Society

## Information for Contributors

*Southern Anthropologist*, the on-line journal of the Southern Anthropological Society, welcomes essays and book and film reviews that broaden anthropological knowledge of all subdisciplines and their applied forms.

Manuscripts should be typed, double spaced, including references, notes, and quotations. Submissions exceeding 10,000 words or 40 pages (including all figures, tables, reference, and notes) will not be considered. Book and film reviews should not exceed 800 words. Substantive reports on informal seminars, discussion groups, and intellectual events are also welcome, as are long review essays (15-20 manuscript pages) in which the reviewer develops an original argument through the critique of and reaction to two or more works. SA follows The Chicago Manual of Style (use in-text citations rather than notes).

**The preferred means of manuscript submission is electronic, via e-mail attachment to both [erlozada@davidson.edu](mailto:erlozada@ davidson.edu) and [jpatico@gsu.edu](mailto:jpatico@gsu.edu)**

The editors are

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and

Jennifer Patico  
Georgia State University  
335 Sparks Hall  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Maps, charts, graphs, and other images should be sent as separate files from the manuscript. All images must be high resolution (at least 300 dpi) and saved as EPS, TIFF, or JPEG. Photoshop and Illustrator files are also acceptable. Include the original Excel file containing charts and graphs created in this application. All images should be converted to black and white.

Manuscripts are generally evaluated by the Editors-in-Chief, by one or more members of the Editorial Board, and/or by referees. Authors are invited to suggest potential reviewers; however, the editors will not be bound by these suggestions.

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